

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, April 23, 2018 – 4:00 pm

Regular Open Board Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Board Members:

Donna K. Thewes	Board President, Republican Member
Ann M. Balcerzak	Vice President, Democratic Member
Patrick R. Mullinix	Republican Member
Raymond M. Rankin	Democratic Substitute
Diane L. Butler	Republican Substitute
Michael S. Molinaro	Board Counsel

Staff: Guy C. Mickley	Director
Phyllis A. West	Board Secretary

Absent: Charlotte B. Davis	Deputy Director (excused)
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Visitors: None

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:14 pm with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Draft copies of the minutes from the March 26, 2018 meeting were provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was distributed at the meeting. President Thewes asked for a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Patrick Mullinix motioned to accept the minutes and Ray Rankin seconded the motion.

Action: The March 26, 2018 minutes were unanimously approved.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members made no additions or changes to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to discuss.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Thewes reminded Board members that Wayne A. Robey, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Howard County, will swear in the 2018 Primary Election Canvass Board at 4:00 pm on May 21st at the Board meeting. She asked members to please be prompt. She also stated that if a member must miss the meeting, they can be sworn in at the courthouse.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Guy Mickley reported that staff will be working on several issues as we gear up for the election:

1. General Office Update:

- a. **Warehouse** -- The pollbook software upgrade is underway and about 60% complete. All equipment and supplies for the election have been checked and are currently being packed at the warehouse. We have acquired new signage for lines at the polling places, which are the last items to be packed. He recognized Jim and John Holton for finding these at a reasonable cost. They will be on collapsible easels at each station in each polling place and are easy to manage.
- b. **Absentee** -- The Absentee staff has entered 350 records for the Primary Election as of Friday. This number is extremely low when compared to past elections and is typically indicative of turnout we will see in the polling places for the election.
- c. **Voter Outreach** -- This usually winds down as we near the election, as we need employees in the office for critical tasks. Mr. Mickley introduced Dawn Sinclair, our Voter Outreach Coordinator, who reported on activities to date and those planned in the coming months.

Ms. Sinclair stated that our outreach program has been more aggressive this year. She has worked closely with Howard County Public High Schools and obtained their approval to visit all public high schools in the county. We have visited the high schools during the lunch hour to register voters 16 years and older as well as to recruit students to serve as election judges. Twenty-seven additional events were held at various locations including Howard Community College, The Black History Expo and The Bain Center.

To date, 100 students have been signed up to work as judges or alternates and about 125 voter registrations have been processed. Those who are minors had their parents sign a consent form, and Ms. Sinclair plans to contact all parents of student judges prior to the election with a reminder. Future events include The Elkridge Fire Hall Blood Drive, Savage Fest, the Howard County Fair, Ellicott City Fire Open House and the 50+Expo. Visits will also be made to high schools again in September.

Board members asked several questions, including were other staff members involved in this effort and whether the Korean and Chinese communities had been part of this outreach yet. Guy Mickley reported that in addition to Ms. Sinclair, other staff members participated in the outreach activities when they were available. He also stated that we had participated in a Korean festival and had visited a church twice last fall. Ann Balcerzak suggested that we review

the ethnic groups in Howard County and consider outreach there. Patrick Mullinix is visiting schools frequently with his job and regularly mentions voting at his school presentations. President Donna Thewes thanked Ms. Sinclair for her outstanding endeavors and hopes she continues to have great responses to her efforts.

- d. **Cybersecurity** – The Director reported on the Harvard/MIT Cybersecurity Conference he attended in Boston at the request of the State Board with two staff members from SBE. High level participants from 38 states were represented. He stated that it was the best conference he had ever attended. They discussed cybersecurity and physical security issues, did tabletop exercises the first day using various problem scenarios for which participants would have to try to resolve multiple issues at once and take appropriate action. The next day, instructors taught participants how to run the tabletop exhibits so they could train staff in their own states. It was designed to help attendees think on their feet, focus on the facts and prioritize issues. It was extremely well done, and he plans to use this training for our staff in the future.

Cybersecurity continues to be a hot topic within the election office and the field in general. We must do our part to protect the information which is in our control and custody. The State Board and the Department of Homeland Security conducted a phishing test through email of all election employees. There were several emails mailed, and those that clicked the link were sent to a screen that showed what the recipient had done wrong. To our knowledge, none of our employees clicked the links and we stayed secure throughout the test. Another way that hackers try to get into computers is through social media accounts. No one in this office has access any longer to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and a few other social media accounts from their office computers. Mr. Mickley indicated he also blocked Netflix since streaming video that can also infect a computer. As we progress in this new age of cyber awareness and security, there is a good chance that more sites and applications will be blocked in the future for the security of the election process.

- e. **Office Overhaul** -- We have continued office improvements over the past month with a few employees relocating their workspace. We have also had a mass exodus of office pets and all are now gone.
- f. **Ballots** -- The ballots have been proofed both on paper and audio for the BMD. Mr. Mickley is in the process of ordering ballots for the Primary Election. We are using historical data from the past several elections to optimize our ballot order and the distribution to the polling places and early voting. Our ballot order is due this Friday, but the Director plans to complete it after this meeting tonight.
- g. **General Security** -- The staff continues to gear up for the election from a general security aspect. All staff have passed the fingerprinting and background check that is now mandatory for elections employees due to our Critical Infrastructure designation from the Department of Homeland Security. Ann Balcerzak asked if the Board needed background checks, and Mr. Mickley said the State has confirmed that they do not.
- h. **Rover Training** -- Guy Mickley indicated there will be a training class for Rovers (which affects two Board members) sometime in the future, probably close to the next Board Meeting. Board members suggested holding it at the end of the May Board Meeting.

2. **Registration** – Registration continues to be typical for a Gubernatorial Primary election. We have seen a small uptick in voter correspondence in the new year, which will probably be the continuing trend through the primary election.

Diane Butler said she had to miss the active shooter training class offered at the office but would like to take it. Guy Mickley will check with other counties to see if they are offering a class she can attend. He also informed the Board that staff had training on Stop the Bleed and Opioid Overdose Treatment recently.

3. **Budget** – The Director’s budget meeting with the County Council for the yearly work session is scheduled for Friday, May 4, 2018. He does not expect the budget to be changed for any reason, as it has been through three reviews without change. He will be first on the agenda that morning.
4. **Judges** -- The judge department has continued to be busy filling vacated slots and signing up judges for training classes. Staff will continue to recruit individuals to place as Alternate Judges once all slots are filled so that we have a pool of judges to replace those who decide they can’t work the election. This year’s crop of election judges has been very good on word-of-mouth recruitment to friends and family as compared to previous years. Please refer to your handout for judge numbers as of today.

Judge classes have been going strong all month long. We have trained 90% of our provisional judges, about 80% of our voting judges and we currently have about 50% of our check-in judges trained. More classes are being held this week through Saturday for check-in. Greeter judges have training this week, and Chief Judges and Technical Judges have their training classes the following two weeks. We will have make-up classes for judges that could not attend a training class during their regular training weeks.

New this year, we will have service pins for every judge who works the election. They were delivered two weeks ago and were designed and ordered in conjunction with Baltimore County to keep costs down. Carroll County will join in the pin purchase for the next election. We will buy pins for every election cycle in the future so that judges can display their longevity by wearing their pins from past elections.

5. **Legislation** -- The General Assembly has closed the session for 2018. Board members received by email a list of the several bills passed that affect our elections in Maryland. Director Mickley briefly reviewed the major changes to processes due to this new legislation. Diane Butler asked if the Same Day Registration Constitutional Amendment, which will be on the General Election ballot, will include the costs? Guy Mickley stated that we don’t know the total costs yet. There will be many changes in network needs, new equipment, procedures and more. Ray Rankin asked what impact there would be if the State determines this needs to be done at the precinct level. Mr. Mickley stated that even if MVA databases were made available, there will be a huge cost. Donna Thewes stated there will be a very large financial impact that the public may not be aware of regarding this legislation. Another item of note is SB333, Ballot Requests and Voting Procedures -- which proposed to count provisional ballots and reject a voter’s Absentee Ballot if they voted both ways. This legislation did NOT pass, which means that by law, both ballots still must be rejected.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

Mike Molinaro, Esq., indicated he had two things to report. Nikki Charlson from SBE gave notice that SBE will conduct three LBE Board Counsel conference calls on May 23, June 6 and June 20, 2018. He asked the Director or Board members to please let him know if they had any issues they would like him to discussed. Director Mickley indicated that Directors are now included on these calls. Mr. Molinaro also reported that Ann MacNeille, Assistant Attorney General in Baltimore City, is dealing with a referendum petition and contacted him to see if Howard County had a packet we used for this purpose. He told her yes, the Director had one, and forwarded the package to her. Mr. Molinaro indicated she was very grateful for the assistance.

Director Mickley then stated that he had received a phone call to discuss a possible Howard County charter amendment. He suggested that the individual come into the office so that his questions could be answered, but no one came in.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Thewes asked for a motion to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting so that the Board could meet in Executive Session according the Open Meetings Act General Provisions. This was to discuss renewal of the Board Counsel's contract and approval of the January 22 Executive Session Minutes. Patrick Mullinix offered the motion, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

Action: Board members unanimously voted to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting at 5:18 pm so that the Board could convene in Executive Session.

At the end of the Executive Session, President Donna Thewes reconvened the Regular Open Board Meeting at 5:38 pm. She reported that the minutes of the Executive Session held on January 22, 2018 were approved and that the Board Counsel's contract has been approved and renewed for two years.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Donna Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting. Ray Rankin offered the motion, which was seconded by Patrick Mullinix.

Action: Board members unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:39 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, May 21, 2018 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President